

Koenings' Reeded Edge Half Newsletter #50

June 15, 2023

Dear Reeded Edge Half Collector:

Something to Think About

Below you will find 4 Series of half dollar die marriages that include all half dollars minted from 1807 to 1891:

1. Capped Bust Lettered Edge Half Dollars 1807 to 1836 (Courtesy of Overton 3rd Edition)

Year	No. of Varieties	Accumulated Total	Year	No. of Varieties	Accumulated Total
1807	4	4	1823	13	168
1808	10	14	1824	17	185
1809	15	29	1825	18	203
1810	10	39	1826	20	223
1811	13	52	1827	49	272
1812	10	62	1828	23	295
1813	10	72	1829	20	315
1814	9	81	1830	23	338
1815	1	82	1831	20	358
1817	13	95	1832	23	381
1818	15	110	1833	15	396
1819	15	125	1834	21	417
1820	8	133	1835	10	427
1821	7	140	1836	23	450
1822	15	155			

2. Capped Bust Reeded Edge Half Dollars 1836-1839 (Courtesy of Dick Graham 1st Edition)

Year	No. of Varieties	Accumulated Total	Year	No. of Varieties	Accumulated Total
1836	1	1	1838-O	1	43
1837	25	26	1839	8	51
1838	16	42	1839-O	5	56

Something to Think About (cont.)

3. Liberty Seated Half Dollars 1839-1891

(Courtesy of Bill Bugert Vol. I thru VI)

Year	No. of Varieties	Accumulated Total	Year	No. of Varieties	Accumulated Total
1839	7	7	1856-S	6	522
1840	11	18	1857	16	538
1840-O	14	32	1857-O	7	545
1841	5	37	1857-S	4	549
1841-O	11	48	1858	48	597
1842	14	62	1858-O	41	638
1842-O	13	75	1858-S	14	652
1843	37	112	1859	11	663
1843-O	18	130	1859-O	16	679
1844	15	145	1859-S	7	686
1844-O	22	167	1860	9	695
1845	6	173	1860-O	12	707
1845-O	20	193	1860-S	2	709
1846	17	210	1861	24	733
1846-O	27	237	1861-O	15	748
1847	13	250	1861-S	10	758
1847-O	28	278	1862	5	763
1848	18	296	1862-S	6	769
1848-O	26	322	1863	9	778
1849	15	337	1863-S	4	782
1849-O	16	353	1864	9	791
1850	4	357	1864-S	5	796
1850-O	14	371	1865	8	804
1851	8	379	1865-S	9	813
1851-O	5	384	1866	8	821
1852	3	387	1866-S	10	921
1852-O	2	389	1867	9	930
1853	?*	-	1867-S	10	940
1853-O	22	411	1868	6	946
1854	?*	-	1868-S	8	954
1854-O	58	469	1869	9	963
1855	?*	-	1869-S	3	966
1855-O	19	488	1870	9	975
1855-S	4	492	1870-CC	5	980
1856	9	501	1870-S	4	984
1856-O	19	516	1871	12	996

Something to Think About (cont.)

3. Liberty Seated Half Dollars 1839-1891 (cont.)

(Courtesy of Bill Bugert Vol. I thru VI)

Year	No. of Varieties	Accumulated Total	Year	No. of Varieties	Accumulated Total
1871-CC	7	1,003	1877-CC	15	1,070
1871-S	8	1,011	1877-S	38	1,108
1872	10	1,021	1878	?*	-
1872-CC	9	1,030	1878-CC	1	1,109
1872-S	4	1,015	1878-S	1	1,110**
1873	7	1,022	1879	?*	
1873-CC	8	1,030	1880	?*	
1873-S	1	1,031	1881	?*	
1874	?*	-	1882	?*	
1874-CC	3	1,034	1883	?*	
1874-S	4	1,038	1884	?*	
1875	?*	-	1885	?*	
1875-CC	12	1,050	1886	?*	
1875-S	22	1,072	1887	?*	
1876	?*	-	1888	?*	
1876-CC	40	1,112	1889	?*	
1876-S	43	1,155	1890	?*	
1877	?*	-	1891	?*	

* I could not find a book by Bill Bugert on the number of varieties for these years

** The 1,110 figure does not include the Addenda Data Sheets for New Die Marriages

4. Liberty Seated Half Dollars

(Courtesy M. L. Beistle in 1929)

Year	No. of Varieties	Accumulated Total	Year	No. of Varieties	Accumulated Total
1853	7	7	1882	3	57
1854	9	16	1883	2	59
1855	5	21	1884	1	60
1874	6	27	1885	2	62
1875	7	34	1886	2	64
1876	5	39	1887	2	66
1877	4	43	1888	2	68
1878	4	47	1889	2	70
1879	3	50	1890	3	72
1880	2	52	1891	3	75 (approximate)
1881	2	54			

I believe the total for Capped Bust Lettered Edge Half Dollars (1807 to 1836) of 450 die marriages and the total for Capped Bust Reeded Edge Half Dollars (1836 to 1839) of 56 die marriages are correct. The total for Liberty Seated Half Dollars is approximately 1,185 plus or minus 20 die marriages. I couldn't find one of Bill Bugert's earlier books on Liberty Seated Half Dollars and had to rely on die marriages reported by M. L. Beistle in his 1929 book.

It is my opinion that both the John Reich Collectors Society (JRCS) and Liberty Seated Collector Club (LSCC) members should also be collecting Capped Bust Reeded Edge Half Dollars.

This month, I intend to inform you of how JRCS members relate to the totals on the first 3 pages by stating some interesting facts about JRCS members. Next month, I will attempt to discuss facts about LSCC members.

First, I have been a member of JRCS since 1986 (JRCS #048) and have collected Lettered Edge Halves for years. Second, I used Ahwash for Liberty Seated Dimes in the 1980's but didn't join LSCC until late 2020 as I wanted to learn more about half dollars minted in New Orleans (LSCC #2798).

Did you know?

The John Reich Collectors Society was started by the 5 authors of the book "Early United States Dimes 1796-1837" (announced in Coin World, January 1985). They were **David J. Davis**, **Russell J. Logan**, **Allen F. Lovejoy**, **John W. McCloskey** and **William L. Subjack**. I think the order was Davis, JRCS #1, McCloskey, JRCS #2, Logan, JRCS #3, Subjack, JRCS #4 and Lovejoy, JRCS #5.

Jules Reiver was JRCS #6 and was the East Coast Representative. Why is that important? It is important because Jules was the greatest die variety collector ever. When he passed on February 11, 2004, at the age of 87, his collection was sold by Heritage Coin Auctions on January 28-30, 2006. Jules specialized in die varieties and die states of Copper and Silver issues from 1792 to 1839. He had over 2,000 different die varieties and as the Heritage catalog mentions, "While a few specialists may have finer or slightly more complete collections of individual series, Jules' holdings were typically in the top five of every denomination and series".

An interesting side note, according to the internet, Jules won the Bronze Star in the Battle of the Bulge. In fact, Henry Fonda played the part of Jules Reiver in the movie "Battle of the Bulge".

As far as Capped Bust Reeded Edge Halves, Jules owned **53** out of **56** known die marriages. The 3 die marriages he was missing were: 1838-O GR-1, 1839-O GR-2 and 1839-O GR-3. He did own an 1839 GR-8, Greatly Rotated and an 1839 GR-8, Normal Rotation.

Jules wrote at least 4 books including 3 Variety Identification Manuals (VIM) on bust half dimes, bust quarters and Reeded Edge Half Dollars and "The United States Early Silver Dollars, 1794 to 1803".

The original book “A Registry of Half Dollar Die Varieties and Sub-Varieties” was written by M. L. Beistle in 1929. It had descriptions of all half dollars minted from 1794 to 1929. Since then “Early Half Dollar Die Varieties 1794-1836, First Edition, was written by Al C. Overton in 1967 and a Revised Second Edition was published in 1970. Al Overton passed away on February 11, 1972.

In 1987, “Supplement to Early Half Dollar Die Varieties 1794-1836, Revised Edition, Al C. Overton” was written by the Bust Half Nut Club (BHNC). There were 53 members at that time and included **David Davis** and **Russell Logan** (2 of the Dime Book authors) and **Jules Reiver**. Apparently, **Dick Graham** joined BHNC after 1987.

“Early Half Dollar Die Varieties 1794-1836, Third Edition, First Printing by Al C. Overton was edited by Donald L. Parsley in 1990.

In general, BHNC members only collect “**Lettered Edge** Half Dollars from 1794-1836”. At least that is what they say in their Charter membership. Capped Bust Lettered Edge Halves have a completely different obverse compared to Capped Bust Reeded Edge Halves as the Lettered Edge obverse has 7 Stars on the left side of the obverse and 6 Stars on the right side. The Reeded Edge obverse is just the opposite, it has 6 Stars on the left and 7 Stars on the right. On the Capped Bust Lettered Edge Reverse there is the motto “E PLURIBUS UNUM” over the eagle’s head, while the Capped Bust Reeded Edge Reverse is without the motto. The diameter and thickness of Lettered Edge Halves are also different than Reeded Edge Halves.

In 1988, **Jules Reiver (a BHNC and JRCS member)** wrote the first book on Reeded Edge Half Dollars when he had “Variety Identification Manual for United States Reeded Edge Half Dollars 1836-1839” printed. On page 4, he stated that his book “is merely a preliminary study of the possible varieties of the reeded edge half dollars”. In fact, he expected new varieties to be found. Jules made about 125 to 150 copies and was selling them for \$9 to JRCS members and others. Many BHNC and JRCS members had difficulty using Jules’ book since it was mainly word descriptions and so different from the Lettered Edge halves.

In 2012, **Dick Graham (a BHNC and JRCS member)** wrote the first book on Reeded Edge Half Dollars that had a photo of every die variety. Jules gave a copy of his VIM to Dick in the mid 90’s. After Dick noticed that many collectors had abandoned the series as Jules’ VIM was in their terms, “too difficult to use” Dick was able to spend at least one day a month for many years where he would visit Jules and view and study Jules’ collection. Dick had 325 copies of his book printed in 2012. It was sold out by 2015. In January 2018, Dick gave permission to have 100 additional books to be printed.

In February 2018, I had 100 copies of my book “Reeded Edge Half Dollars 1836 to 1839, R-4 to R-8 Die Varieties” printed. It was sold out by December 2019.

In May 2023, I had 100 copies of my book “The Koenings Collection of 1839 Philadelphia Half Dollars” printed. This book is very important since it is an update to Graham’s 2012 book and shows numerous large photos (65) of the eight known die marriages with die stages. It also shows large photos of the seven known die marriages of Liberty Seated Halves.

Collectors Comments

I received comments from two collectors that bought my New Book on 1839 Half Dollars. First Brian Greer had me phone him and he gave me additional information on my 1839 GR-1 that is pictured in my book. Brian said that he had originally purchased the coin at the Baltimore Coin Show in 2008 from a French coin dealer. Brian also mentioned that the coin is now listed in the “United States Pattern, Experimental and Trial Pieces, sixth edition, by J. Hewitt Judd, M.D. On page 31, it is listed as JUDD 100a Silver—R.E. Same obverse. Reverse of No. 95. Circulated, reported by Julian Leidman. On page 30, the reverse is listed as No. 95 Silver –R.E. R-8 (JUDD’s words). Always good to learn something new. Thanks for sharing Brian!

Jeff Clark sent me a photograph of the obverse of an 1839 GR-7 that he found with a heavy die break. Dick Graham mentions in his book that 1839 GR-7 was not known to have die breaks. See photo below:



Jeff describes the die breaks as follows “The die break began on the rim adjacent to star number 11 and proceeded to the curls of the portrait. It appeared also to occur on the other side proceeding to the rim between stars 2 to 3. In addition there appeared to be 2 or 3 die breaks from the point of the bust to the rim.” Thank you for sharing Jeff!

Top 25 Rarest Reeded Edge Half Dollars (Cont.)

1839 GR-6 (20th Rarest)

Last month's Newsletter #49 provided you with large photos and information on the 1838 GR-8 die marriage. It was the 21st Rarest Capped Bust Reeded Edge Half Dollar and I rated it R-3+ (201 to 300 known).

This month, I will show large photos and information on the 1839 GR-6 die marriage. Graham lists the following census for 1839 GR-6: 64, 58, 58, 55, 55, 55, 50, 50 and 50 published in 2012. In my November 2021 Census, I had 64, 62, 58, 55, 55, 50, 45, 30, 25, 15 reported by JRCS members, Bust Half Nut members, LSCC members and others. Graham assigned 1839 JR-11 as the equivalent die marriage for those members that collected by Jules Reiver numbers.



1839 GR-6 PCGS MS62 CAC Obverse (Courtesy of Heritage)

This obverse was previously used in the 1839 GR-5 die marriage and has the same weak stars at Star 1, 12 and 13. However, now the bust is weak, even on higher grade specimens (see large circle above) and the vertical line from the top of 3 is visible (see small circle).



1839 GR-5 or GR-6 Reverse

Dick Graham struggled for 6 years before he decided GR-6 was a separate die marriage. I have also struggled with this issue. The above reverse photo is a perfect example as it shows attributes that are known for 1839 GR-5, such as a lump between UN (at the base) that only appears on GR-5 and a build up under TED that also only appears on GR-5. There is no lump on the leaf next to H in HALF that usually appears on GR-5. The above photo also shows a weak ST and a weak F D that appears on GR-6 and all 1839 GR-7's. 1839 GR-5 has strong tail feathers on all specimens. The above specimen has weaker tail feathers that are even weaker on 1839 GR-7, in fact almost disappear on GR-7.

It is my opinion that 1839 GR-6 doesn't exist as a separate die marriage. 1839 GR-5 as a die marriage is one of the two most common for the year 1839. 1839 GR-7 is the most common. However, since I do believe in collecting die stages, I believe all collectors should still acquire an 1839 GR-6 as a Very Late Die Stage of 1839 GR-5. I rate GR-6 as R-3+ (201 to 300 known).

Next month, Newsletter #51 will present large photos and information on the 1837 GR-6 die marriage (the 19th Rarest of the Top 25 Rarest). I rate GR-6 as R-4 (121 to 160 known).

Closing Comments

I believe **lack of published information** has prevented most JRCS and LSCC members from collecting Capped Bust Reeded Edge Half Dollars 1836-1839. Only 425 books were printed of Dick Graham's 2012 masterpiece.

Last month, I announced my **New Book** on 1839 Half Dollars Die Marriages was for sale. On June 17-18, 2023, I will be selling and autographing my New Book at the Buena Park Coin Show. The Bourse Chairman, Kerry Pieropan will have me at the entrance to the show.

Because of this opportunity, I had **50 additional copies** of my February 2018 book "**Reeded Edge Half Dollars 1836-1839, R-4 to R-8 Die Variety**" printed. It has been 11 years since Dick Graham's book was first printed. Some R-5 die marriages have gone down and some R-4 die marriages have gone up, etc. These 50 copies will come with a page that shows the latest rarity and a New Top 25 list. You will now have 3 options to buy my books as follows:

Option 1 - New Book on 1839 Half Dollars

This book "The Koenings Collection of 1839 Philadelphia Half Dollars, Including Liberty Seated Half Dollars" is my attempt to inform all collectors of the possibilities that exist in both series. This book not only includes all 8 die marriages of 1839 Reeded Edge Halves but also includes all 7 die marriages of Liberty Seated Half Dollars. In addition, there are numerous die stages of 1839 Reeded Edge Halves including (3) 1839 GR-8's, Greatly Rotated, (1) 1839 GR-8 with Normal Rotation and (2) 1839 GR-8's with Late Die Stage die breaks.

The book also covers the history of previous authors on the subject and includes extra large photos of each obverse and reverse (6" in diameter). The book is 8.5" x 11" and has protective Mylar covers along with a spiral binding that allows you to open the book and lay it flat to see both sides of a particular die marriage. The book has 80 pages and a total of 65 photos.

Cost = \$39 plus \$4 for shipping and handling

Option 2 - Reprint of February 2018 Book

This book "Reeded Edge Half Dollars 1836-1839, R-4 to R-8 Die Varieties" was sold out by December 2019. It has 50 pages showing 17 of the rarest die varieties with large photos. The book also is 8.5" x 11" and has protective Mylar covers and spiral binding.

Cost = \$29 plus \$3 for shipping and handling

Option 3 - 1 copy of 1839 Book plus 1 copy of February 2018 Book

Cost = \$63 plus \$5 for shipping and handling

If you would like a copy, please send a check or money order to:

**Jim Koenings
P.O. Box 2382
Riverside, CA 92516**

If you would like your copy sooner, you can send payment through Paypal:

**Option 1 = \$43 (\$39 + \$4 shipping)
Option 2 = \$32 (\$29 + \$3 shipping)
Option 3 = \$68 (\$63 + \$5 shipping), you save \$5 + \$2 shipping**

to my email address of bustcoin1@verizon.net .

Currently my Newsletter is being emailed to over 120 interested collectors. About 80 collectors purchased my 2018 book or have Dick Graham's book.

The 1839 Book is very important since there is over 11 years of research that went into this book and the discovery of 1839 GR-8 Greatly Rotated specimens. I spent 8 months from August 2022 to April 2023 and found all seven 1839 Liberty Seated Half Dollar Die Marriages that are shown in my book.

For those of you that don't have either Graham's Book or the first printing of my 2018 Book, this is a rare opportunity to obtain this information.